

Republicans have a lot of important work to do. But this is also important business we are dealing with, dealing with the Detroit automobile manufacturers.

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

AUTOMOBILE PACKAGE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me pick up on the issue the majority leader was discussing. Of course, we are not going to agree to expedite a procedure to a bill we have not read. The fundamental problem here—I know this is not the majority leader's fault—is we have not been able to get a copy of the bill that we believe represents an agreement that has been reached between congressional Democrats and the White House on the automobile package.

Until we get the actual bill and can read it, it is unrealistic to expect that I can ask my Members to advance consideration of the bill until we know what is in it. So as soon as we can have a look at it—we will be having a conference today on my side. Hopefully, we will have the bill by then. But as of this morning, we still have not seen a final version of the bill. Once we do, we will review it and see if it meets our standard for support, which will be the taxpayers' standard for support.

But as I indicated—and the majority leader has already picked up on that—there cannot be a vote on the legislation today because we do not know what it looks like.

On a bill this critical, with so much taxpayer money at stake, we cannot rush this through without adequate review. We are happy to begin the review process as soon as we get a product. My Members will be discussing the merits of the latest version of the plan, as I indicated, at our weekly policy lunch, which will occur today around noon. So this afternoon I expect to have some more substantive thoughts on this latest proposal's chances for support within the Republican conference. We will address this issue before the end of the week. I agree with the majority leader on that.

For those who need a refresher, let me remind everyone of the Republican criteria for this legislation: First and foremost, we will not let taxpayers spend their hard-earned money on ailing car makers unless these companies are forced to reform their bad habits, either inside or outside bankruptcy.

This means workers will not be paid not to work, it means a final bill would not interfere with pending environmental lawsuits in a one-sided manner, and it means struggling car companies will have to rationalize their cost structures because a company that does not respond to market conditions is a company that is doomed to failure

anyway. Republicans will not allow taxpayers to subsidize failure.

As I have said repeatedly, my Republican colleagues and I wish to put struggling car makers on a path to long-term success, but, obviously, there will not be widespread support for a plan that does not do that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say in response to my friend, the distinguished Republican leader, we have had cooperation in moving forward on this legislation. I have not been a big fan of the White House, as everyone knows, for the last 8 years. But they have, in good faith, worked with us trying to get a piece of legislation we can bring before this body.

That is one reason it has taken so long. But President Bush is still President of the United States. He has tremendous power and rightfully so. Senator Obama is not, in any way, wanting to step on that. So this is something that is important. I totally understand what the Republican leader is saying. If I were in his place, I would do the same thing. It is not fair to ask that we move forward on this legislation without people having the opportunity to read it and study it and talk to others about what is in it.

I would hope, through, after we get the legislation, we can work something out to expedite the procedural matters. No one is under the illusion that we can do it on a simple majority; we are going to have to get 60 votes. I hope there is support from both sides of the aisle. I am fairly confident there will be. We will, later tonight, revisit what we might be able to do tomorrow and/or Friday to complete this legislation. We will do our very utmost to get this legislation completed so the Republican leader can take to his caucus the document so people can start, hopefully even before that, poring through it.

I have said so many times this thing is done, it is on its way, and have been disappointed when my staff says: Well, there are a few more issues that have come up. I think that has ended. I certainly hope so. I hope that at 12:30, when we recess, both the Republicans and the Democrats have a piece of legislation they can look at.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

FAREWELL

Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the floor of this Chamber for the final time in my service as a Senator from the State of North Carolina. As I do, I cannot help but think back some 12 and a half years ago, when I sat up in the Senate Gallery to watch another Senator Dole, my husband Bob, deliver his farewell speech in this Chamber after nearly three decades of service.

Bob began his remarks by reflecting on words spoken by Abraham Lincoln in 1860, when a delegation arrived in Springfield, IL, to officially inform him he had been nominated by his party for the Presidency. Lincoln spoke just two sentences, and then he said to the large crowd of friends and neighbors gathered on his lawn:

Now I will no longer defer the pleasure of taking each of you by the hand.

I rise with a heart full of gratitude, and, like President Lincoln and like Bob Dole, what I wish I could do is to take the hand of all those who have helped me on my life's journey and to express my heartfelt thanks. I would begin with friends from my home State. I have been blessed to serve the public in numerous capacities during my career. Without question, the highest honor has been representing North Carolina in the Senate. I thank my fellow Tar Heels for granting me the privilege of serving them.

Then there are a number of North Carolinians now gone whom I wish I could take by the hand again to thank them for the examples they set, the values they instilled in me and the love, guidance, and support they provided.

There is my grandmother, Mom Cathey. I can still vividly recall the Sunday afternoons spent with other neighborhood children at her home. We would enjoy lemonade and homemade cookies while Mom Cathey read from her Bible, which is now one of my most cherished possessions. My grandmother practiced what she preached, and she truly lived her life for others.

My beloved father John Hanford always supported my interests and taught me that anything worth doing deserved my best effort. When I wanted to run for president of my high school, which was not something girls did in those days, he stood right behind me cheering me on. He was protective but not overbearing.

My precious mother Mary, who passed away just shy of 103 years old, was also front and center in my life. She taught me at a very young age that the real joy in life is giving back to your community and helping those around you, and she was always there to urge me to go the extra mile: You finished your homework early. Have you thought about entering that essay contest? Unbeknownst to her, mother's example of hard work and dedication drew me toward public service as my mission field, my passion. She was a constant source of inspiration.

My dear brother John, 13 years my senior, who passed away earlier this year, was a role model I put on a pedestal. He encouraged me at every turn, providing me with invaluable counsel and infinite support. And there is no finer example of a beautiful, caring heart, a person who lives her faith, than John's wife Bunny.

Speaking of faith, I am so proud of my two nephews, John Hanford III, currently traveling the world as our U.S. Ambassador at Large for religious freedom, and Jody Hanford, his brother, 17 years with Campus Crusade for Christ and 15 visits to work in Russia and Ukraine.

I also wish I could thank teachers such as Agnes Weant, whose dedication to young people led her outside the classroom on more than one evening to discuss colleges and future opportunities with my parents, and Duke University's dean, Florence Brinkley, who encouraged me to spend a summer in England studying at Oxford.

Because of the support and encouragement I received from family, friends, and teachers, I ventured to Washington, seeking to be part of something greater than myself. As a young adult, I was incredibly fortunate to encounter several great mentors who offered me direction, opportunity, and encouragement, mentors such as Bill Cochrane, who was thought of by many as North Carolina's third Senator. Bill served in the office of North Carolina Democratic Senator B. Everett Jordan, and he was like a one-man personnel office, assisting eager young people in finding jobs in Washington. During the summer of 1960, I worked in Senator Jordan's office. Knowing that firsthand historical experiences are much treasured by young people, Bill helped me get a front-row ticket to my first national campaign on board Vice Presidential nominee Lyndon B. Johnson's whistle stop tour of the South. Although my staunchly Republican father was concerned about my riding through the South, especially through Salisbury, my hometown, on LBJ's train, I knew Bill Cochrane was giving me an unmatched learning experience, and I was right.

And how I wish I could hold out a hand of thanks to a remarkable woman who served in this Chamber for many years, Margaret Chase Smith of Maine. While working for Senator Jordan, I had the gall to request a meeting with Senator Smith. She didn't know me from Adam, but not only did she agree to see me, she devoted an entire hour to sharing her thoughts and encouraging me to get a law degree so I could bring some additional skills to a public policy job. I took her advice and entered Harvard Law School 2 years later. Senator Smith's example taught me the importance of having an open door for younger people who also seek public service as a noble endeavor and might need a little advice and mentoring along the way.

I was privileged to have the best mentor imaginable in Virginia Knauer,

special assistant to President Nixon for consumer affairs. Virginia, a truly unselfish boss, wanted me as her deputy to have every experience that she had—my first testimony before Congress, my first press conference, speeches across America. After working with her for 5 years, Virginia wanted to support my nomination to the Federal Trade Commission. "Oh, no, Virginia," I remember telling her. I said, "I love being your deputy" when she broached the subject. Virginia replied:

Elizabeth, you have grown and learned as much as you can in this job. It is time for you to spread your wings.

In other words, she nudged me out of the nest. To this day, Virginia, at age 93, remains one of my most cherished friends, and I am grateful to President Nixon for my many years on the Federal Trade Commission.

I am indebted to former President Ronald Reagan for asking me to serve as his Secretary of Transportation and to President George Herbert Walker Bush for the privilege of serving as Secretary of Labor. And I thank the Board of Governors of the American Red Cross and their army of millions of volunteers for allowing me to serve 8 years as their president. At each of these positions, I have been fortunate, indeed, to be part of a team of extraordinary, hard-working men and women. I thank all those who have shared the mission fields with me over the years.

My special thanks to my very talented and capable Senate staff. These incredible men and women understand what it means to be true servants of the public, to have a passion for what they do. Yes, we have shared a mission field. We have worked hard. We have had some fun along the way, too, and we made a positive difference for North Carolina and America.

I thank all Members of the U.S. Senate. I knew many of you as friends long before becoming your colleague, and you will remain my friends after I depart the Senate. You will surely be in my thoughts and prayers as you steer our country through the challenging times ahead.

Most especially, I thank my incredibly supportive husband Bob, who is a constant example—and probably for some of you as well—that a leader should have not only a strong backbone but also a funny bone. From armed service to public service, elected six times by his Republican colleagues to be their leader, Bob's more than half a century of service to our country is a constant inspiration. Because of his leadership, we now have the beautiful memorial to the men and women of World War II. Bob's compassion and caring for his fellow man, exhibited through his actions in both public and private life, are to me unparalleled. He remains the light of my life. For all that you have done for me and for countless others and for our country, I thank you, Bob, from the bottom of my heart.

I could never have dreamed of the people I have been privileged to meet,

the jobs I have been privileged to hold, or the issues I have been privileged to influence. Perhaps Theodore Roosevelt said it best with these words:

Far and away, the best prize life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

I am so very fortunate to have found that best prize as a servant of the public. While I don't know what awaits me in life's journey, what will come next, I pray that I will find a way to continue to work hard at work worth doing.

May God bless America, and may God bless the United States Senate.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

BAILOUT DECISION

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the very important issue before the Congress this week: the proposed bailout of the three major U.S. auto manufacturers. Of course, I have looked at this issue and the proposals that have been put forward very carefully because this is such a serious issue. I have studied the draft language that was released on Monday that certainly constitutes the proposal as we have known it for the last few days. I have followed all of the discussions and ongoing negotiations and ongoing changes to that language proposed Monday. In fact, I have offered concrete—hopefully helpful—suggestions of movements that could possibly garner my support. Based on all of that, after very careful thought and consideration, I have reached two inescapable conclusions for me. First, I cannot support this proposed bailout of the three U.S. auto manufacturers. Second, because I believe this proposal actually dooms those companies to failure, doesn't save them from it, I will use every procedural tool available to demand an amendment process on the floor of the Senate and to delay and block the measure as it presently stands.

I don't come to this conclusion lightly. I certainly realize that the failure of these companies, should they go under, would be devastating, first for millions of individuals and fine American families and secondly for our economy as a whole. In reaching this decision, I don't trivialize or minimize in any way the impact of that sort of failure. Certainly that has been brought home to bear in my State, particularly in northwest Louisiana. We have a significant GM plant in Shreveport. I am very aware of the positive impact of that plant. I am very aware of the workers there, the families, the suppliers who are affected. And, of course, all across our State, I am very aware of auto dealers and other folks who are tied so closely to this industry. I oppose this bailout plan, not in spite of the suffering to all those folks and our economy that failure of these companies would bring, I oppose this